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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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Food Is A Bargain. Food costs have risen less since 1947-49 than most other consumer items in the cost-of-living index, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports. Transportation costs have increased 52 percent. Housing costs are up 35 percent. Rent has increased 47 percent; and medical care is up 69 percent. But food cost increase was only 24 percent. Yet, the farmer gets none of the increase. In fact, he gets 15 percent less than he did in 1947-49. Marketing costs have risen 44 percent, more than offsetting the decrease in what the farmer gets.

Frozen Juices May Be More Concentrated. The usual mixing of one 6-ounce can of frozen orange juice concentrate with three cans of water may not be the general rule after October 19. Manufacturers can sell more highly concentrated juice under revised U.S. Department of Agriculture standards after that date. This means you could make more juice from the same size can you now buy. The new USDA standards also allow manufacturers to add up to 10 percent of some citrus juices--such as tangerine juice--for more color.

8 Million Jobs Between Consumers and the Farm. An estimated 8.4 million workers were employed in marketing food and nonfood farm products bought by U.S. consumers in 1963. That's an increase of 6 percent from 1958 to 1963, a U.S. Department of Agriculture report shows. This number includes workers in processing and wholesale plants, wholesale and retail stores, and other establishments.

Polluted Air May Cause Hidden Plant Damage. Even though it causes no visible damage, polluted air containing ozone may slow plant growth, U.S. Department of Agriculture plant researchers report. A high energy form of oxygen, ozone can be formed by the action of sunlight on automotive exhausts and other sources of air pollution. Tests showed 10 percent growth retardation on tobacco, a plant very sensitive to ozone. Tests using other plants are being conducted. Earlier studies in California indicated that ozone isn't the only air pollutant which retards plant growth.



Part Goes For The Package. Wonder what part of your grocery money goes for the packaging? Of every \$20 spent for groceries, \$1.50 to \$2 goes for the boxes and wrappers that help keep the food in good condition and attract attention, U.S. Department of Agriculture reports show. Packaging costs vary greatly. Sometimes the package may cost as much as the food itself. The trend is toward smaller packages to meet the food needs for one meal, and thus reduce waste.

Don't Cheat Yourself. Eating a bird-size breakfast or skipping the whole meal is a poor way to try to keep your weight under control, USDA nutritionists say. It's a far better plan to eat a good breakfast and learn enough calorie arithmetic to even out your day's calorie quota over the three meals. For most people, and particularly for children, it's sound planning to have 1/4 to 1/3 of your day's food at breakfast, including a good source of protein, such as eggs, meat, or milk. For a single copy of "Eat A Good Breakfast--Leaflet 268," send post card to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

Rice Popularity Gains. How much rice did you eat last year? In the last five years annual home consumption of rice has climbed from 5.8 pounds per person to 7 pounds, a U.S. Department of Agriculture study shows. The reasons? The rice industry has stepped-up its market promotion. Consumers in normally low-rice sales areas are increasingly aware of its versatility and value in menus. Consumption may increase even more in the future as a result of new, specialty rice products recently introduced, such as instant rice and pre-cooked rices with the gourmet appeal of special seasonings.

Walk That Weight Off. Yes, it's possible for you to have your cake and lose weight, too. Simply get in the habit of a short, brisk, daily walk. Actually it's just a good lunch hour refresher. For example, a man who has been eating enough to balance his energy needs might take a daily 20-minute walk at moderate speed instead of sitting for that time. If he does not change the way he eats or change his other activities, he will lose about 5 pounds in a year, U.S. Department of Agriculture nutritionists say.

What Happens When A Chicken Crosses A State Line? It gets inspected for wholesomeness by the U.S. Department of Agriculture before it can be offered for sale to consumers, and that's a law. The same thing happens to turkeys and ducks, of course. The amount of poultry and poultry products inspected by USDA for wholesomeness increased considerably in fiscal 1964, climbing from 84.7 to 87.5 percent of all poultry sold off farms. This reflects the trend toward large-scale poultry processing operations which ship inter-state. And Americans are eating more poultry.

SMART SHOPPER

Be A Label Looker. Buy packaged cereals or any other packaged food by weight, not by size of the package, U.S. Department of Agriculture family economists suggest. To compare prices, first look for the weights listed on the labels and note the prices. To figure the cost for an ounce or a pound, just divide the weight into the total cost.

Be A Warranty Watcher. When you buy an appliance, read the warranty carefully so you will know what responsibility the manufacturer takes for repairs and replacements, USDA family economists say. Buy the product of a manufacturer represented by a reliable service organization convenient for your use.

Check On The Plentiful Foods. You could actually plan entire meals around foods the U.S. Department of Agriculture says will be plentiful in October. Plentiful foods are at harvest peak and likely to be specially priced. October features are apples and rice. Also listed are beef, turkeys, cheese, and Bartlett pears. This will be an especially good year for apple lovers--the crop will be the largest since 1937.

COMMUNITY

Go See What A Bargain School Lunches Are. October 11-17 has been declared National School Lunch Week by President Johnson to recognize the program's achievements during its 18 years of operation. National School Lunch Week gives individuals and civic-minded club groups a good chance to see how some of the 17 million daily lunches are served. The National School Lunch Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, serves two worthwhile purposes. It makes effective use of abundant supplies of food, provides good markets for farmers, food industries and local businesses. Most importantly, it contributes greatly to the health and well-being of children.

Stress Safe Pesticide-Container Disposal. To protect communities from any possible hazard, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has outlined safe container disposal methods for large-scale pesticide users. USDA points out that pesticide users have responsibility to their communities to see that every empty container and all surplus pesticides are disposed of properly and safely.

Give Your Community A Boost. Are low incomes and lack of economic opportunity causing many of the families to move away from your community? Many areas actually have a fine climate, a good labor supply, or potential tourist attractions, but local leaders and all citizens need to get behind a program that will use these untapped resources effectively. For local Rural Areas Development, USDA can provide technical aid, help in organizing and educating leadership. For details, write SERVICE Editor, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

New Water Supply for 79 Cities. Many reservoirs built through the USDA Small Watershed Program are bringing multiple benefits to areas with chronic water problems. For example 81 reservoirs in 59 watershed projects have been designed for both flood prevention and municipal water supply. These reservoirs will supply water to almost half a million people in 79 cities and towns in 21 States. Several communities have already attracted new industry because of flood protection and plentiful water. Sponsored and carried out by local organizations, small watershed projects get technical and financial assistance from the USDA. For information for your community, write SERVICE Editor, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

PLANTS AND INSECTS

Drought Affect Your Lawn? Fertilizer and a good soaking are the best things for all lawns right now--drought-affected or not, U.S. Department of Agriculture plant specialists say. Don't wait for a rain. If the extremely dry weather has caused small brown dead spots no bigger than a saucer, the water and fertilizer should do the trick. Reseeding probably won't be necessary. But if the spots are larger, the smart thing to do is rake to the bare soil, fertilize, then reseed.

Protect Your Roses. Roses must be protected, not only against low winter temperatures but against fluctuating temperatures, U.S. Department of Agriculture plant scientists say. Immediately after the first killing frost, while the soil can still be worked easily, they recommend piling soil 8 to 10 inches high around the canes. But don't dig up your rose bed to get the dirt--you may injure the roots of your roses. After mounding soil about the canes, tie them all together to keep them from being blown about and loosening the root system.

Marigolds for House Plants? The tall, gangly marigold--she isn't what she used to be! By controlling lighting and chemical treatment, USDA plant scientists can transform the stemmy, summer bloomer into a low, bushy, year-round house plant. And since it requires only a two-month growing period from seed to sale, the managed marigold is expected to become a popular florist item.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Know How Much Credit Costs You. Consumer credit comes from banks, credit unions, finance companies, and retail stores. Some charge more than others, so it's wise to shop around to find where the credit rate is lowest and most convenient, USDA family economists suggest. To help you compare credit costs, a billfold-size Quick Credit Guide is now available. It shows an easy way to figure your dollar cost of credit, lists typical credit charges, and gives you a check-off list of important things to remember before you sign an installment contract or borrow money. For a single copy of "Consumer's Quick Credit Guide" send post card to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

No "His" and "Hers" Budgets. Making a partnership of money management--even when there are two incomes--is the best way for a young couple to get off to a good financial start. Since newlyweds are often more romantic than factual about the actual costs of running a household, USDA family economists say they should face money matters frankly. Best idea is to get the problems down on paper, then to agree on a realistic spending plan which considers the wishes of both. As circumstances change, adjust the plan. For "A Guide To Budgeting For The Young Couple--HG-98," send post card to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

You Have A Big Stake in Agricultural Trade. American agricultural exports exceeded \$6 billion in fiscal year 1964. That's the largest agricultural export operation ever carried out by one nation in a single year in the world's entire history. The U.S. stake in world agricultural trade and aid is surveyed in depth in the 1964 Yearbook of Agriculture, Farmer's World, just published by USDA. A helpful fact book for individuals as well as club groups studying world trade and aid, Farmer's World is available at \$3 from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

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